



Federal Emergency Management Agency

Washington, D.C. 20472

MEMORANDUM

FOR: US&R
Search Work Group Chair

DATE: Sept-10,11 & 12, 2003

FROM: Canine Subcommittee
Bruce Speer--Subcommittee Chair

SUBJECT: **Evaluator** Conference Call Minutes

Please find the attendance and agenda items addressed at the recent Canine **Evaluator** Conference Call.

MEETING DATE(s) >>		9-10,11,12-03		call # 1	
MEMBERSHIP / ATTENDANCE					
Bruce Speer [chair]					
Member	Y/N	Member	Y/N	Member	Y/N
Bruce Berry (SWG--Moderator)	N	Mike Agnew	Y	Kathy Jo Carlisle	Y
		Hilda Wood	Y	Nancy Hachmeister	Y
Shirley Hammond (CSC)	Y	Torie Kidd	Y	Gary Hay	Y
Anne McCurdy (CSC)	Y	Fred Pitts	Y	Billy Kidd	Y
		Rose DeLuca	Y	Debra Tosch	Y
Teresa MacPherson (CSC)	Y	Steve Swaney	Y	John Dean	Y
Ann Wichmann (CSC)	Y	Sonja Heritage	Y	Walt Harrison	Y
		Teresa Ortenberger	Y	Lynne Englebert	Y
		Randy Gross	Y	Rory Rehbeck	Y
Monica Barger	Y	Carol Herse	Y	Pat Grant	Y
Lee Turner	Y	Rob Cima	Y	Sally Timms	Y

John Gilkey	Y	Chic Gerlach	Y
Jeaneen McKinney	Y	Sam Balsam	Y
Pat Gilliland	Y	Jeff Place	Y
Bob Sessions	Y	Mike Marks	Y
Elizabeth Kreitler	Y	Darren Bobrosky	Y
Cathy Schiltz	Y	Robert McCauley	Y
Ron Weckbacher	Y	Julie Noyes	Y
Diane Whetsel	Y	LaFond Davis	Y
Mark Dawson	Y	Terry Schmidt (guest)	N

**US&R Search Work Group Chair
Evaluator Conference Call Meeting Minutes
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AGENDA ITEMS/DISCUSSION

- Intro/General Info

- Rotation Roster/Evaluator Payment System

- Test Set Up

- Changes in DSCREP

- Aggression

- Score Sheets

- Evaluating VS Coaching

- Questions

PROPOSED ACTIONS

■ General Info:

Effective 7-1-03, all Type II handler Shadow Evaluators who have met all requirements except attending the CSST course, shall be immediately rostered with the understanding that they will either attain Type I status or take the CSST course within the next 18 months.

All Type I handler Shadow Evaluators shall be immediately rostered and strongly encouraged to take the course in a STM status or management capacity.

All STMs must take the course.

To apply for approval as a Lead Evaluator, the candidate must be a current Type I handler Evaluator and must have met all prerequisites.

A single certification process is in the concept stage. Meanwhile, we will continue the two tiered system. If and when implemented, the single certification process will not “un-certify” any Type II teams.

Due to liability issues, FEMA can no longer allow non Task Force personnel involved in FEMA sponsored events. The use of non-Task Force helpers and victims for evaluations should be handled with a liability waiver appropriate for your geographical area.

■ Rotation Roster/Evaluator Payment System:

Each Evaluator will be afforded two (2) opportunities to evaluate when his name is at the top of the list. Upon 2 refusals, his name will drop to the bottom of the list and begin cycling through the system again. The hosting TF may choose 1 evaluator per pile—the rest must come from the top of the list. The hosting TF is encouraged to use Type II Evaluators whenever possible.

Payment for evaluators is made by the hosting TF with the use of the FEMA grant funds, as follows:

\$300 per day of service (set up and testing)

per diem at local rate (usually \$30-\$50)

transportation and lodging

The TF may elect to pay the evaluators as temporary employees, or through a personal service agreement, or cut a P.O.

■ Test Set Up:

While we want to replicate real life scenarios, we need to take into account the time limits and test “rules” that constrain the Type II testing team. The Type II test holes should be constructed so as to contain scent as much as possible. Every effort should be made to avoid diffuse and/or weak scent scenarios for this Basic Level evaluation.

The Type I test holes may be deep, diffuse and difficult, but be prepared for different dogs indicating scent in various places as the conditions change throughout the test.

■ Changes in DSCREP:

In the Obedience element a team may fail ONE of the following—heeling, stop or long down. If they do not fail any other element, they may redo the failed skill just before the Rubble. In the case of the long down, other dogs may be solicited to redo the testing dog, but they are not being tested.

In the Agility element, even though there are no attempt limits, the safety and welfare of the dog will be taken into consideration at all times. If the evaluators decide the safety of the dog is being compromised, they may terminate the element or the test for that team.

In D & C, the elevations may be uniform and must be clearly visible to the dog. They should be 35" X 24" in size, 15" X 30" high and stable. The intention is to assess directability, as opposed to agility.

The interview process in the Rubble portion has been modified to “establish scene safety”. Thus, every question on the interview questionnaire does not need to be asked, but rather, an appropriate interview will be assessed as to the establishment of scene safety.

■ Aggression:

The aggression policy applies to all FEMA events. The TF may assess their teams according to the guidelines as set forth in the DSCREP. The responsibility for appropriate action lies with the Task Force, if a problem arises outside of an evaluation. If there is a problem at an evaluation, the evaluators will follow the prescribed procedure.

Appropriate “communication” by dogs will not be considered an act of aggression.

Such communication should be quick and not involve contact.

In the testing of human aggression in the Type II evaluation, it is permissible to use different “strangers” through out the test.

■ Score Sheets:

As the score sheets are legal documents for which we (the paid experts) are accountable, they must be complete, accurate and legible. Fails must be completed, also. Comments should be accurate observations as opposed to broad judgmental statements. Do not offer an unsolicited training plan. Though some judgment calls will be necessary, comments should not be worded so as to invite challenge. The Lead Evaluator, with the help of the hosting TF, is responsible for routing the paperwork.

■ Evaluating VS Coaching:

An evaluator may remind the testing handler once for handler errors such as counting seconds in D & C too fast and crossing the starting line. In agility, a handler may be reminded once for preceding the dog or removing the collar. The vet check is the handler’s responsibility. An evaluator should always answer questions about the rules and regulations.

■ Questions and Answers:

Q: Is running a test dog mandatory? Do you run it the same day?

A: A test dog of the same Type **should** run thru the test to expose any potential glitches, such as visual, safety or scent problems. This run-thru **should** be done the same day, if possible. Preplanning should include a test dog, but if the test dog becomes unavailable, the test may continue.

Q: Is it permissible for just one evaluator to observe the human aggression testing while the other two observe the canine aggression testing?

A: Yes.

Q: Is the rule of testing limits retroactive? Does the team start over when they recert?

A: The testing limits rule is NOT retroactive. The count began for all teams 7-1-03. When re-certing, the team starts over.

Q: Can the handler touch the dog in agility?

A: No, not in any sort of "guiding" capacity, especially around the neck. The handler may receive one warning and asked to restart.

Q: If a dog fails an agility obstacle, does the stop/slow/turn on it count?

A: Yes. The dog can fail an obstacle, yet complete the slow/stop/turn on it.

Q: On the figure 8, must the dog get within 2 feet of the other dog?

A: Yes, the team must redo until they get with two feet, or until the evaluator calls the exercise incomplete.

Q: Can D&C have different targets.

A: Yes, but every attempt should be made as to uniformity and not creativity.

Q: Must all evaluators hear the rubble interview?

A: Two out of three must be present for the interview.

Q: Do all interview questions need to be asked?

A: No, scene safety must be established by the interview questions and may vary according to the scenario given.

Q: In agility, does the handler need to remain stationary?

A: No, the handler must not precede the dog. The more the handler can remain in one spot, the less likely that he won't precede the dog, but he may follow the dog.

Q: If an evaluator passes up an opportunity to evaluate due to illness, should it count as a refusal?

A: The evaluator may block out an amount of time up to 6 months to count as one refusal. Reasons for refusals need not be given and will not be judged.

Q: Are evaluators covered by Workers Compensation?

A: Yes, on FEMA sponsored events, evaluators are covered by the Federal Program.

Q: Can non-Task Force individuals participate in FEMA events?

A: No, not until the FEMA Legal Issues Work Group advises otherwise.

Q: How will Type II evaluators meet the maintenance requirement of evaluating once every 2 years?

A: The 2004 calendar has a test scheduled every month. They are all combined Type I and II tests. Whenever possible, hosting TFs are asked to use Type II evaluators. Type II evaluators are encouraged to become Type I handlers, if they are not. The subcommittee is currently working on a method to expedite the process to become a Type I evaluator.

Q: Why are the test certificates not received more quickly?

A: FEMA is in the process of changing its logo to incorporate the DHS seal. Certificates will be issued as soon as the final seal is approved.

Q: In agility, is debris allowed in the tunnel?

A: In the past, some tests have had debris in the tunnel, while others have not. As, this is a mandatory obstacle, evaluators should attempt to be uniform in its evaluation. Debris should not be placed in the tunnel.

Q: Is there a generic example of a liability waiver for TFs to use for non Task Force helpers (victims, timers, etc) during tests?

A: No, the waiver will be specific as to your locality. Some areas do not allow such helpers, even with waivers. Check your local regulations.

Q: With the interview open-ended now, how does the evaluator manage the process?

A: The evaluator should aim towards keeping it short—providing enough information so that the handler, through his questions, establishes scene safety appropriate for the scenario given.

Q: In the retest of the long down—if additional dogs are needed, how does the evaluator choose them?

A: The evaluators have latitude as to how many and which dogs are chosen.

Q: Should duct tape be used on the Alert Tube?

A: No, as it prompts some dogs to tear it off.

Q: When is a recall “losing interest”?

A: This is an example of a case-specific call made by the evaluator cadre.

Q: Is it OK for a dog to sit and bark (bomb dog style) at the Alert Tube and/or on the rubble?

A: Yes, as long as the dog is indicating scent in the appropriate area.

Q: At what point is a person “attached” to a Task Force?

A: Good question. We’ll find out.

In closing, we would like to thank all those who were able to participate in this first round of calls. While we had a high percentage of participants, we hope to have **all** evaluators attending the next session. While this synopsis will help in our attempt to provide consistency in the evaluations nationwide, it does not reflect the full discussions that took place.

Please contact your Regional Rep with any questions or comments.

Thanks again,

Your Canine Subcommittee

